



ENHANCING THE BENEFITS OF NAULI WITH A KEY EXERCISE FOR ABDOMINAL MUSCLE STRENGTH

————— Second Edition —————

Artem Orel



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encoding and publishing house

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This ebook is dedicated to the powerful combination of nauli, a yogic abdominal manipulation, with the dynamic exercise “leg raises on wall bars” from gymnastics. Leg lifts complement the arsenal of abdominal exercises in yoga and rival nauli in terms of their therapeutic effects, particularly for gastrointestinal tract disorders. The two exercises engage different aspects of the rectus abdominis muscles. The synergy between the yoga and gymnastics techniques produces unique therapeutic and other benefits that neither exercise can achieve alone. Two options for mastering leg raises from scratch are described, as well as two auxiliary exercises that allow you to achieve maximum progress in leg lifts. Furthermore, an appendix to the ebook highlights some lesser-known facts about nauli.

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INTRODUCTION



Dynamic “leg raises on wall bars” (alternatively referred to as “leg raises” hereafter) with straight legs touching the crossbar above the head is a key strength exercise for abdominal muscles. Considered one of the most challenging bodyweight exercises for this muscle group, it is also one of the most effective. By performing this exercise alone, a practitioner becomes capable of performing dozens of other strength exercises for these muscles, rendering them unnecessary. The exercise engages the same abdominal muscles as nauli, primarily the *rectus abdominis*.

Video of the exercise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udHk7l7mHdU>

While nauli fully reveals the hidden potential of the *rectus abdominis* muscles for spatial movement, leg raises fully engage their strength. By manipulating the same muscles in different ways, leg raises and nauli complement each other perfectly. Nauli is known for its ability to enhance blood circulation in the abdominal organs by causing negative pressure. In turn, leg lifts achieve the same effect, but in the opposite way—by increasing pressure.

Regularly practicing leg lifts drastically enhances the benefits of nauli, particularly its therapeutic effect, which is enabled by its physical and physiological influence. This occurs due to the proximity

of the abdominal muscles to these organs, separated only by a layer of fat and fascia. All exercises that are therapeutically effective for internal organs have a powerful systemic effect, since those internal organs ensure the vital activity of the entire body. They contribute to the elimination of dosha imbalances. By combining nauli with leg raises, one can achieve a powerful therapeutic effect on the vital internal organs in the abdominal cavity (including those of the digestive, urinary, and lymphatic systems) that is not possible with either exercise alone.

For the deepest physical and thus therapeutic impact, it is necessary to apply maximum strength throughout the full range of motion. Maximum strength of the *rectus abdominis* muscles is attained when they lift the greatest weight of your body vertically upwards, resisting the force of gravity in the direction opposite to the movement.

Leg lifts on wooden wall bars (also known as a gymnastic ladder, stall bars, or Swedish wall) are considered the gold standard in core strength training in gymnastics worldwide. Performing this exercise is the primary purpose of the stall bars equipment (the most supplied apparatus in any gymnastics facility) in this sport. There is even a specialized modification of the bars designed solely for this exercise in gymnastics; details of this modification are described in a later chapter.

Wall bars transform regular hanging leg raises into an exercise in which the strength of the core muscles is trained separately. An athlete does not need to expend additional effort to keep their body straight, which would otherwise decrease the number of leg raise repetitions they could perform.

The bars behind the back prevent the use of swing and momentum instead of strength, which is inevitable when performing the exercise on a horizontal bar (thereby critically reducing the power and effectiveness of the exercise). Shoulders serve as a foothold, stabilizing the body and simultaneously preventing the upper back from moving backward, which would reduce the range of motion and make the task easier. For maximum effectiveness, the exercise should be performed using strength alone throughout the entire range of motion.

Muscles are utilized to execute any movement and maintain static positions. There are only two actions muscles can perform: passive extension and active contraction. When complemented by dedicated core and upper body training, the most challenging asanas and vinyasas are performed with substantially greater ease and proficiency.

The repetitive movements transform leg raises into a kind of strength yantra, capable of accumulating and balancing prana in the body, filling the dan tian, and energizing the body's channels. It is highly likely that leg lifts help to reverse apana and keep semen in the body, preventing accidental leakage.

Body Weight Exercises Are as Natural as Asanas

Utilizing your own weight is a natural approach designed by nature, and leveraging this option has minimal risk of trauma. Our legs and arms are built to move our body's weight in various directions, including upward movements such as pull-ups. When performed mindfully without pushing through pain, these exercises are safe and effective, similar to the approach taken with asanas in yoga.

Two fundamental bodyweight exercises—leg raises on wall bars and pull-ups/chin-ups—are sufficient to serve as the necessary strength foundation and a catalyst for many body practices. Pull-ups and chin-ups not only target the arms but also engage the upper back and the entire upper body,

making them the primary strength exercises. Leg raises, on the other hand, train the core and unite the upper and lower parts of the body.

By incorporating leg raises on wall bars with pull-ups or chin-ups, you can take your asana practice to a new level, making the postures more perfect and easier to perform. Strength also plays a crucial role in mastering challenging vinyasas.

Embracing these bodyweight exercises as a complement to your yoga practice can lead to significant improvements in your overall control and ease of movement within asanas. As you continue to develop your strength through these exercises, you'll find yourself capable of exploring more advanced postures and vinyasas with confidence and grace.

Far-Reaching Therapeutic Benefits of Nauli and Leg Raises

Regular practice of leg lifts and nauli contributes to improved digestion. More efficient gastrointestinal tract function ensures a high quality and quantity of nutrients entering the body from the food consumed. In turn, this leads to an improvement in the composition and formula of the blood, which distributes nutrients throughout the body. As a result, the therapeutic possibilities of the proposed exercises extend beyond the abdominal cavity. Gut health is also connected to one's mental state.

These ideas align with ayurveda's belief in the crucial role of digestion in maintaining overall health. Ayurveda views digestion as responsible for nourishing the body's tissues, maintaining a strong immune system, and supporting mental and emotional well-being.

Nauli is known for creating a strong blood flow to the organs of the abdominal cavity, causing negative pressure that can have therapeutic effects. In contrast, leg raises achieve the same result of enhancing blood circulation through a different approach: they increase pressure instead.

During these exercises, an activation and stimulation of the internal organs and tissues occurs, along with deep massage and abundant blood supply. With regular practice, this leads to a permanent improvement in the functionality of the organs. As the Chinese proverb states, "Where there is blood, there is qi."

Enabling and Controlling Abdominal Breathing

Controlling the abdominal muscles is essential for pranayama practitioners and anyone practicing breathing exercises, whether yogic or otherwise. To achieve the sensation of "breathing with the stomach," where air reaches the bottom of the lungs, one must master control over the abs by building their strength throughout the complete range of their motion. A strong abdominal wall allows for effortless engagement of abdominal breathing, resulting in deeper and more efficient respiration.

Abdominal breathing provides additional lung engagement, which translates to more oxygen being inhaled and transported by the blood, as well as better waste removal upon exhalation.

Performing Leg Raises in the Absence of Nauli Proficiency

If you have already mastered uddiyana but not yet nauli, incorporating leg raises into your practice will mutually reinforce both exercises. Leg raises and uddiyana primarily target the abdominal area, working in synergy to enhance the benefits of each other.

Practicing leg raises will help burn excess abdominal fat, allowing the vacuum created in the lungs during uddiyana to pull the abdomen in deeper, reaching more functionally significant tissues. As a result, the therapeutic effects of uddiyana will be amplified.

Reducing excess fat through leg raises will increase your ability to perform more repetitions in a single set, further enhancing the exercise's effectiveness.

Even if you are not proficient in either nauli or uddiyana, performing leg raises alone will still provide significant benefits. The impact and power of leg raises can be compared to those of nauli, making them a valuable addition to your practice.

The Role of the Body's Center in Power Transmission

The center of the body serves as a crucial connection point, enabling the seamless transfer of power from one body part to another without loss. When a movement is initiated from the most distant part of the body, its fulcrum, the repulsion force is transmitted through the legs (or whichever limbs are supporting the body) and the body's center to the arms. The process enhances the force exerted by the entire body, providing stability and strength.

This principle is exemplified in practices like Tai Chi, where practitioners leverage the entirety of their body to execute movements with exceptional strength that surpasses mere physical power, even when the individual parts are not trained separately. By applying this concept in asanas and vinyasas, practitioners can promote whole-body engagement in them, resulting in an unprecedented quality of performance.

The key lies in the redistribution of gravity from the ground through the body. By maintaining a strong connection between the supporting limbs and the center of the body, the impulse is transmitted without a diminishing force.

Further, by focusing on the role of the body's center in power transmission, practitioners can unlock new levels of strength and grace in their movements, both on and off the mat.

Modified Wall Bars for Leg Raises in Gymnastics



In gymnastics, a special modification of wall bars is designed specifically for performing the leg raise exercise. The bar at head level is recessed inwards, allowing the practitioner to tilt the head back and direct the gaze upwards along the trajectory of the movement. This improves neuromuscular coordination, enabling the execution of an additional one or two repetitions while also preventing excess strain on muscles not directly involved in the movement.

Furthermore, the top bar is extended forward by three to five centimeters to prevent overextension in the shoulders when hanging. This subtle but crucial modification ensures proper form and eliminates the risk of injury.

Gymnastics facilities are typically equipped with both regular wall bars and ones specially modified for leg raises. Both types are considered suitable for practice and are commonly made of wood to prevent pressure on the neck. Gymnastics training centers are equipped with more wall bars than any other piece of equipment, emphasizing the importance of leg lifts.

LEAD-UP EXERCISES

When learning to perform leg raises, you can use two effective methods to build strength and perfect your technique in order to be able to make your first clean repetition with straight legs touching the bar above your head in the hanging position.

Method 1: Using a Board Attached to Wall Bars



Attaching a board to wall bars is the most effective and recommended method for mastering your first leg raise. Begin by securing the board to a lower bar on the wall bars. As you progress and increase the number of repetitions in each set, gradually move the board higher until it reaches an angle of approximately 60 degrees relative to the ground.

This progressive approach allows you to develop strength, control, and endurance in your abs while maintaining proper form and technique from the very beginning. By starting with the board in a lower position and gradually increasing the angle, you can adapt to the increasing difficulty of the exercise.

While the movement itself remains the same, the plane of motion steadily changes from the easiest horizontal position to the most challenging vertical one.

After mastering leg raises on the board, progress to a hanging position on the wall bars. In this position, aim to lift your legs at the highest possible angle, bringing your toes as close to the bar above your head as possible with each repetition.

Video of the lead-up exercise performed on a board:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llxfGjxgHZU>

Method 2: With Bent Legs in a Hanging Position

While hanging on wall bars, begin by raising your fully bent legs until your knees touch your shoulders. As you develop greater strength, progress to raising your partially bent legs until they touch the bar above your head, or at least reach an angle well beyond 90 degrees, with your toes as close to the bar as possible. Once you can perform a few repetitions of bent-leg raises, you will be ready to attempt lifting straight legs to the bar for the first time.

Regardless of the method you choose, you can expect to touch the bar above your head with your legs straight while hanging vertically within two months or less. The unique characteristic of leg raises is that even beginners with no prior training experience can start performing and progressing in this exercise right away despite its advanced nature. Unlike other advanced exercises, there is no need to progress through a series of easier exercises.

THE MAIN EXERCISE

The regimen and technique for performing the full version of leg raises and both lead-up exercises (whether performed with bent or straight legs, or on the attached board) are identical.

Regimen

1. To progress quickly from 0 to 10 reps: Train for 2 consecutive days and then take the 3rd day off. Do 3 sets of maximum reps and rest for 7 minutes between each set.
2. After reaching 10 reps, to achieve greater results (up to 13 reps or more): Workout every day. Do 2 sets of maximum reps and rest for 10 minutes between each set.

At first, rest between the sets should be 5 minutes, with an increase to 7 minutes after making moderate progress and an increase to 10 minutes after achieving significant progress (10+ repetitions per set). The more repetitions you do per set, the greater the need for a longer break to allow breathing and heart rate to return to normal and for muscles to recover. After each set, take 3 minutes to rest in shavasana and then lie down for additional 2 minutes before beginning the next set.

Skipping even one training day can lead to a regression in the number of repetitions in the next training session.

Technique

- **Grip:** The stronger, the better. A strong grip activates and engages the muscles of the wrists and forearms, effectively stabilizing the upper body. Focus on pulling the bar toward yourself rather than bringing your body to the bar (a subjective feeling). This technique ensures a stronger grip and engages the entire arm, leading to better overall performance and results. Exactly as in postures where we stand on our legs or arms and start the movement from them, in the hanging position, we start with the arms that connect us to the fixed base. By maintaining a strong grip and actively pulling the bar toward your body, you create a more stable foundation for the exercise. This approach allows you to generate a greater force and maintain a better control throughout the movement. Engaging the entire arm, from your fingers to your shoulders, helps distribute the load more evenly.
- **Toes:** Pull your toes forward to tone the muscles in the front of your legs, turning them into a solid, long lever.
- **Gaze:** Direct your gaze upward along the trajectory of the movement. This improves neuromuscular coordination, making the movement more precise and efficient.
- **Breathing:** Exhale when moving up and inhale when going down. Synchronizing breathing with the movement ensures the consolidation of force on exhalation, which helps with the most difficult phase of the flow.
- **Repetitions:** Perform the maximum number of reps in each set. There is a relationship between the number of reps per set and the therapeutic effect obtained. Increasing the number of repetitions involves almost the entire body in the exercise, in addition to targeting the abdominal muscles.

AUXILIARY EXERCISES

Pull-Ups or Chin-Ups (Choose One You like More)

This exercise directly contributes to maximizing your progress in leg raises. It's recommended to achieve 10-12 reps per set in it.

Pull-ups are the most important bodyweight exercise, particularly for the upper part of the body, including the back. They develop grip strength and strength in the arms from wrists to shoulders. This enables proper adjustment of the position of arms, shoulders, and head when performing leg raises at a 90-degree angle.

Although presented here as an accessory exercise, pull-ups are very beneficial on their own for asana performance and in the medical sense. In combination with leg raises, they serve as an ideal way to prevent cardiovascular diseases, dramatically reduce excess weight, and significantly lower excessive blood pressure in individuals with hypertension.

If you're unable to do a single pull-up, you can use rubber resistance bands specifically designed for pull-up workouts. These bands are available at all major sports stores, and it's easy for anyone to find a suitable combination of bands to assist with pulling themselves up once or several times. As you progress, it's necessary to gradually reduce the total resistance of the bands to increase the load and intensify the workout. Once you're able to do your first pull-up without the bands, you will no longer need to use them.

Regimen

The frequency of training (with or without resistance bands), number of sets, and the rest between the sets are completely aligned with the recommended parameters for leg raises.

During one workout, breaks between exercises are the same as the rest time between sets.

It's recommended to perform the exercises in the morning before breakfast.

Technique

- Type of grip: Select either a pronated (overhand) or a supinated (underhand) grip with hands on the horizontal bar so that the arms are parallel to each other. Continue training without changing the selected type of grip. As you progress in the pronated grip, it will automatically lead to progress in the supinated grip and vice versa.
- Grip strength: Maximum. The concept of a strong grip is identical in leg raises and pull-ups. Maintaining a strong grip throughout the entire exercise is key. Pulling the bar toward your body instead of lifting the body to it is also the same as in leg lifts.
- Breathing: Exhale on the way up and inhale on the way down.
- Pull yourself up until your wrists touch your shoulders (especially when using an underhand grip) or until your chin lifts above the horizontal bar.

Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend)

The seated forward bend, or gymnastics "fold," is crucial for developing the flexibility needed to lift your legs straight on wall bars. Aim to touch your toes with your fingertips while in the folded position.

It is most effective to perform paschimottanasana and other asanas before leg lifts and pull-ups. In gymnastics, power-specific exercises such as leg lifts and pull-ups are performed at the very end of the training session. This approach ensures that all available power is utilized in executing elements first, followed by the development of power itself thereafter.

Four auxiliary movements to deepen the seated forward bend

1. Starting position: Sit on the floor with your legs stretched out in front of you. Press your hands into the floor on either side of your body, lift your hips up, and move them backward. With your hips twisted in this position, return to the starting position.
2. Holding your feet with your hands, bring your heels forward, stretching the back of your legs.
3. After a short while, lift your left thigh up, releasing it and extending it backward. Repeat the same movement with your right thigh.
4. After some time, touch the floor with both elbows and maintain this position for 10 seconds. Then, return your hands to the previous position while maintaining the depth of the forward bend.

With consistent practice and patience, you will notice significant improvements in your flexibility and your ability to perform straight leg lifts.

EXPERIMENT!

After progressing with the outlined regimens, techniques, and exercises, I encourage you to experiment and personalize your training. For instance, consider integrating yoga methods such as mula bandha or kechari into leg raises. Explore various combinations of training frequency, number of sets, and rest intervals. However, always document your results and reflections to evaluate the experiments over time.

CONCLUSION



Attention yoga studio owners: Are you ready to transform your students' practice and set your studio apart from the competition? I invite you to join me in an experiment that combines the ancient technique of nauli with the powerful exercise of leg raises on wall bars.

By installing wall bars in your studio and incorporating leg raises into your students' routines, you'll be offering them a fresh experience that can significantly enhance their nauli practice and enrich asana performance. Not only will this innovative approach attract a wider audience, but it also has the potential to provide therapeutic benefits comparable to drug treatment for certain abdominal conditions. Together, let's explore which conditions can be effectively addressed through this method.

To recreate the experience of well-equipped gymnasiums, I recommend installing two rows of five wooden wall bars and stocking five to ten inclined boards. Additionally, consider incorporating five to ten hinged bars for pull-ups and chin-ups, should you choose to implement them. To gather valuable insights, it would be beneficial to collect feedback from a few dozen, or ideally hundreds, of students as they master the exercise and begin achieving four repetitions in a set—the threshold for noticeable treatment and training effects.

Imagine the buzz your studio will generate when word spreads. Your students will be eager to experience the tangible results for themselves, establishing your studio as the premier destination for those in pursuit of the most effective and cutting-edge techniques.

Don't miss this opportunity to position your studio at the forefront of the global yoga community. Contact me, and I will leverage my expertise to guide you in selecting and setting up the equipment and seamlessly integrate the exercise into your students' routines.

Attention practitioners: Mastering leg lifts on gymnastic wall bars is within reach for nearly everyone. The key is to ensure you have convenient access to the equipment. Each set takes about 30 seconds, and with 3 sets of pull-ups and 3 sets of leg lifts, your total training time is only 3 minutes. Most of the time is spent resting between sets and exercises. Committing to just 3 minutes of training, 2 days out of 3, doesn't require immense willpower. It's all about providing yourself with access to the equipment and creating a comfortable training environment. Uninterrupted access will enable you to stay consistent with your workouts and make steady progress.

So, take action now! Invest \$200 into a set of wall bars for your home, or find a gym that offers them. Make the commitment to incorporate this powerful combination of exercises into your routine. Experience the transformative effects on your nauli practice, changed performance of multiple asanas and vinyasas, as well as sudden healing effects in many conditions. Don't wait—start your journey toward mastering leg lifts and unlocking your full potential today!

For feedback, questions, or suggestions, please contact me at:

Email: artem.v.orel@pm.me

You can find more videos of the mentioned exercises on my YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@WallBarsLegRaises/>

If you like this ebook, please leave a rating on Amazon at:

<https://www.amazon.com/Enhancing-Benefits-Exercise-Abdominal-Strength-ebook/dp/B0C9V697HC/>

Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

APPENDIX 1. Little Known Facts About Nauli

1. Nauli in Yantra Yoga

In Yantra Yoga (the Buddhist-Tibetan variation of Hatha Yoga), nauli is mentioned not as a shatkarma practice for balancing doshas but rather as a mudra with the purpose of directing prana into the sushumna channel. While many other Yantra Yoga methods serve the same purpose, nauli is distinct from all of them.

Dynamic nauli (rotation) is recommended to be done after holding the breath and moving the air down below the navel area based on subjective sensations. Since nauli is technically impossible to perform after a full inhalation, the inhalation should be very short. During the practice, one is instructed to visualize his/her body as a pillar of fire from which sparks fly out in all directions. According to the original text that has been handed down since the 8th century without change, this practice allows directing the karmic prana of the roma and kyangma (ida and pingala) channels into the space of the center channel.

Static madhyama nauli is mentioned separately from rotation as “establishing the central channel.” During its practice, “physical pleasure, heat, and spiritual experiences flare up like fire.” Madhyama nauli is done on an empty hold after full exhalation. It is assumed that a practitioner has already developed at least minor kumbhaka, meaning he/she can breathe comfortably in the following rhythm: inhale for 8 counts—antar kumbhaka for 32 counts—exhale for 8 counts—and an empty hold (bahir kumbhaka) also for 8 counts. When performing nauli during an empty hold separately from the described breathing cycle, it should be expected that the fixation of madhyama nauli will last about half a minute.

There is information in open sources that nauli is used in various types of Tibetan kum nye and trul khor yogas, as well as in the practice of Tummo. One source mentions the use of nauli in one of the trul khor practices as a means of controlling prana in the abdominal area.

2. Variations of Nauli for Imbalances of Vata (Air) and Kapha (Phlegm) and Their Prevalence in Prakriti

In cases of imbalances of vata and its prevalence in the inherent constitution of the body (prakriti), static nauli (3-5 repetitions, each time until the need to inhale) may be more effective when coping with wind rather than rotation. If this is true, the reverse is likely as well: in cases of kapha imbalances and its dominance in prakriti, rotation (nauli kriya) may handle kapha better than static madhyama nauli. This does not exclude one of the variations but rather suggests which variation should be used more.

These considerations are in line with the ideas of S. Agapkin, who suggests that in cases of vata imbalances, static asanas without vinyasas may be more beneficial, possibly even with shavasana after each asana, while in cases of kapha imbalances, a static-dynamic mode with brief fixations of static positions may be more appropriate.

3. Unclassified Facts

- Many Indian scientists and yogis believe that people learned how to do nauli even before the advent of writing. According to their view, yoga and ayurveda initially existed in oral form.

- In ayurveda, performing nauli was prescribed for treating gastrointestinal tract disorders thousands of years ago (the age of ayurveda is estimated at 2500-5000 years). According to its teachings, good health is impossible without good digestion, and disorders in its functioning can lead to many seemingly unrelated diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.
- According to research, 300 million people worldwide claim to practice yoga, with approximately 10% considering themselves advanced practitioners. If it is assumed that only advanced practitioners perform nauli, it can be estimated that around 30 million people regularly perform nauli worldwide.
- Individual practitioners of Tai Chi, qigong, and Eastern martial arts have started to incorporate nauli into their practices. These disciplines share a belief in the fundamental role of the dantian in accumulating “qi” energy and applying it in daily life and training. Nauli thoroughly works on the area of the dantian located four fingers below the navel.

About the Author

The author practices a synthesis of exercises from Hatha Yoga and sports gymnastics, which share many common elements (asanas and vinyasas). This common ground made it possible to incorporate bodyweight exercises into the yoga practice. Additionally, the author is particularly interested in rare exercises with a pronounced therapeutic effect on the functioning of internal organs. These exercises are especially valuable because they have tangible effects on the life support systems of the entire body.